

Great Britain Commons, H. 2
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OBJECTIONS

TO THE

BILL

For Establishing the Trade to *Africa*, in a Regulated Company.

bill read 7 April 1712
I. To the Preamble.

1. **I**T was no *Monopoly*, when the *African-Company* advanced a vast Sum of Money, to *Gain* a new Trade in a Barbarous Country, and to build Forts and Castles to secure it, without which *no Trade* had ever been gain'd to this Day: *But the whole had been, long ago, Engross'd by the Dutch and other Nations.*
2. It was no *Monopoly* to take great Pains, and to hazard the whole in the Adventure. This the Company *Monopoliz'd without Envy.*
3. The *Loss* of the whole would have been no *Monopoly*: No Body would have desir'd to *share in it.*

Quare, Why then should the Company's Purchase be call'd a Monopoly, or be stil'd a Discouragement, or Injury to other Mens Industry or Freedom.

II. To the Enacting Part.

1. The Bill impowers a particular Company of Men, to levy *Mulcts and Fines* to their own Use.

The Offences are not describ'd; they lie hid and unknown; and yet these *Mulcts and Fines* are *unlimited.* This is the perfect Complexion of Arbitrary Power, and yet the Pretence is National Freedom.

2. This Bill *impowers* some particular Men (but who they are, or may be, is unknown) to *impose Taxes* on the Subject, in a general Manner (to wit) on all Exports and Imports to and from *Africa.*

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The Limitation of these Taxes, not exceeding *per Cent.* will signify little : For here is no *Cheque* upon 'em : No *Examination* whether there be just Occasion for 'em : No *Account* to be taken of the Disposition of 'em ; and yet they are to be perpetual. *Above all*, is it to be imagin'd, that a *House of Commons* will communicate or impart, to a Parcel of inferior Tradesmen, *Their chief Privilege* of imposing Duties or Taxes on Merchandize Exported and Imported ? *And that for ever too !*

3. The Bill speaks of giving the *African Company* an *Equivalent for their Forts and Settlements*, and directs the ascertaining that Equivalent by *Arbitrators*, to be chosen by them, and by the new Regulated Company, which Equivalent is to be paid out of the Monies arising by this Act.

As to the Equivalent offer'd, it is fallacious, and to be made by halves ; because it is to be given for the *Forts and Settlements only*, and not for their Interest in the Trade : Whereas the Forts and Lands *and the Trade are inseparable*. The Lands had never been purchased, nor the Forts built at a vast Expence, but *to gain* the Trade ; therefore the *Value* of the Trade, and of the Forts (by which it was gain'd) *is the true Value of the Company's Interest*. As to the manner of ascertaining the Equivalent, by *Arbitrators*, That is extraordinary and precarious, and subject to many Inconveniencies ; neither can it be reasonably supposed, that the Company will *voluntarily submit the Value* of their whole Property to the arbitrary Will of any Man or Men, or will *Choose* any Men for that Purpose.

As to the Fund to pay this Equivalent, that is also falacious ; no Body is obliged to Export or Import. If Men find it their Interest, they will Trade, else not ; so that the Monies arising by this sort of precarious Trade can never be thought or accepted as a reasonable Security for the payment for any Subject's Right and Property.

4. The Bill says, if the Company *will not part with their Interest* in their Settlements, but *will continue to carry on the Trade*, then the Regulated Company shall supply a *Competent Sum* for supporting *Necessary Settlements*.

Here is a Supposition, that the Company *will not part with their Interest* in their Settlements. No, it may be depended on, that they who have groan'd under a Sequestration for thirteen Years, and are now just returning into the Possession of their Estate, will lye down as Martyrs to Property, and *passively bear* the Weight of a Power they cannot avoid, rather than part with their *Rights and Properties* for a Trifle.

But now, suppose the Company *will not part with their Interest* in the Settlements, *it is to be seen* how they are to be used by this Bill.

By this Clause the new People are to enter into which of the Company's Forts and Settlement *they please* to think *Necessary*, and *pay what they please* to think a *Competent Sum* for repairing 'em.

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5. By a subsequent Clause, the Company are excluded from Trading to their own Forts and Settlements ; for, the Words are, *Be it Enacted, That no Person, not being Free of the Regulated Company, shall presume to Ship off any Goods, with intent to Trade to Africa, upon pain of Forfeiture of no less than Ship and Goods.*
6. By another Clause, any Person may Erect a House or Factory *near* the Company's Forts, *which shall have their Protection*; this is a Severity not to be parallell'd, That the Company must be obliged to *Protect the very Men that Devour and Destroy 'em.*
7. By another Clause, the Company are tied up from the *Common Liberty* of other Subjects, they shall not so much as make a beneficial Bargain for themselves ; for the Words are, *No Contract shall be made with any King or Potentate, exclusive of the Regulated Company.*
8. By another Clause, the Company's Ships are *subjected, in a slavish manner,* to the Will and Pleasure of the Regulated Company ; for the Words are, *It shall be lawful for the Regulated Company to load on board any outward bound Ship*
Tuns of Ammunition, Provisions and Stores FREIGHT FREE,
and Soldiers at such price FOR THEIR PASSAGE, as shall be
appointed by them.

This is to be the Condition of the Royal *African-Company*, under this new Regulation.

The Company have a *Right and Property* in the Coasts, Forts and *Sole Trade, or they have not.*

If they have not ; then what need have the Separate Traders of an Act of Parliament to give 'em a Liberty they have already without an Act ?

If the Company have such Right and Property, Why should it be taken from 'em to be given to others ? Was such a thing ever done before ?

- 9 The Bill wholly *omits* the making *any Provision* for a *Considerable Stock*, to carry on the Trade ; and therefore it answers not the *Resolutions* of the House, in that particular.
- 10 The Bill is *utterly against the Consent* of the Creditors, Widows and Orphans, for it *strips* them of their *Security*, without paying their Debts.
- 11 The Bill gives a great share of the Trade *from the Mother Nation*, and admits of its being carried away *to other Places*, which, it's hop'd, will not be endured by any *good Patriot.*

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